

EARLY DAYS
at
CARIBOU CROSSING
and
THE DISCOVERY OF GOLD
ON THE KLONDIKE



By
Patsy Henderson

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Jennie Mae Moyer

THE PATSY STORY

Patsy gives this lecture in the waiting room of the White Pass and Yukon Railway Station at Carcross, Y.T. On a platform he has a table with several models of traps and snares. On the wall are several pictures which he later identifies in the Klondike Story.

Demonstrations of different wild animal calls are given: Moose, Caribou, Goat, Sheep, Muskrat, Rabbit, Fox. He makes an interesting comment on two of the calls when he says: "When rabbit hear the call he think about young rabbit---- but muskrat call makes muskrat think about another muskrat."

Patsy was born about 1876. He was born around Tagish, an old Indian village 20 miles from Carcross. He belongs to the Yukon Indian Tribe. There were nine boys and one girl in his family. His Indian name was Kulsin. ---The name Patsy Henderson was given him by George Carmack. He had two children by his second wife. The last child died last year (1948). His son-in-law, Buck Dixon, is a guide and lives in Carcross with Patsy and his wife.

This story was dictated to Jennie Mae Moyer, August 4, 1949. The phrasing, pronunciation and style of Patsy Henderson has been retained as closely as possible. It was impossible to include the animal calls and songs.

J. M. M.



EARLY DAYS AT CARIBOU CROSSING

Ladies and Gentlemen: I am going to show on this feesh trop how we get the feesh this way before white man. This feesh trop now against the law. We don't use no more. Caribou snare ---moose snare---fox snare---beaver net----all against the law----we don't use no more.

This trop is modern trop--"dead fall". We use for marten and mink. Both same size. When they start out stick falls on neck----we don't quit yet this trop. When mink get in there and has no way out when he touch the bait ---cross piece drop on back and kill him. No rub the fur and he die quick, no suffer. We still use that trop, ---we don't quit yet.

This is gopher snare--we set snare in gopher hole, gopher comes, two little stick drop and pole springs up, gopher caught; they drop at same time

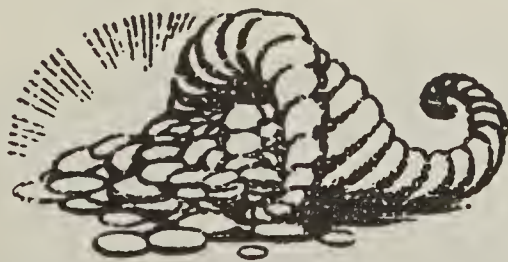
this spring up; when he pull---more choke; he choke hisself. This snare. ---eagle tendon (1/3) ---Caribou skin string (2/3). Skin pull to choke up quick. When he pull he choke---more pull---more choke. The gopher snare ---we still use that. .

Before white man Marten Skin and Silver Fox Skin, we make a blanket out of that. Find no place to sell fur, use ourself. And the beaver skin we sleep on top at that time.

Now I show you how we catch Beaver with net. Beaver has house on the bank, but hole from house away down in water, come out 5-10 feet from bank. Place net one end fairly loose, easy break: one end safe, (fastened tight on shore). We tie string on net, it moves toe nail bell on willow on shore. When beaver pull the net he makes a bell on shore; we know beaver caught; we pull him in. When he make bell, we pull him in on the shore quick before he chews net. In 5-10 minutes he chews net; gets out through hole and gets away. We kill him with a club. Hit him on the head. Now by this time against the law. We don't use no more that kind beaver net.

THE KLONDIKE STORY

This is the Klondike story now, I am going to tell Klondike story. Here is the man (pointing to picture) who found the first gold. That man's name is Dawson Charlie and he find gold in '96 the 17th of August. He is my brud-der and his pardner, Skookum Jim, my uncle. Another pardner, George Carmack (he is a white man, George Carmack) and myself. Four of us, now these people all die excepting me. The time we find gold in the Klondike---just a kid, I am old man now.





I want to tell you a little story about George Carmack. George when he came to this country about '88, no white man here that time; no store, just Indian around here, but white man way down river; not in here. So that George Carmack come from outside Chilkoot Pass. When he come this he married Skookum Jim sister, my aunt. He stay around here with Indians. First year he didn't understand the way Indian live; when he stay with Indian

two years he understand. At that time we don't work for nobody, we work for ourselves. George Carmack likes this. He don't work for nobody. He stay around here five years. He got tired around here and wife and he went down Yukon river. When he went down he said he would not come back for two years. He never came back for two years. We miss him. We go down looking for him-----Charlie, Skookum Jim and me---built little rowboat ourselves. When we start from Tagish 1896 we go down river in rowboat, and we go through Canyon to Whitehorse in rowboat and we row the boat all way down the river. No machine; all hand work. We rowed down the Yukon from Tagish. Two weeks time. When we come down Klondike we find him, George Carmack. He stay among the Indians on the Klondike. We told him we come

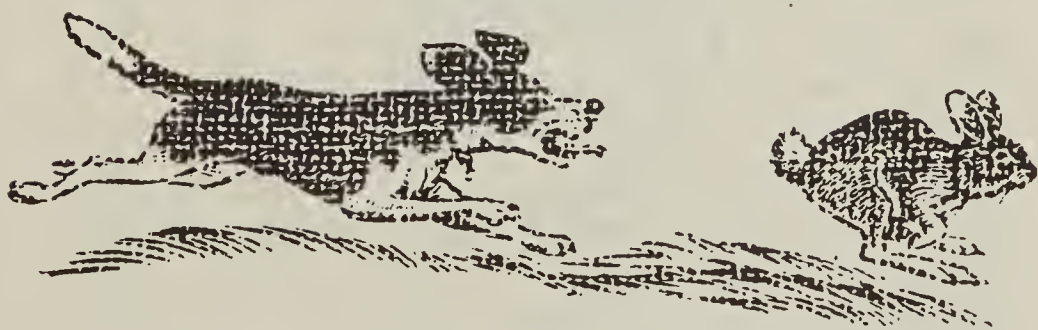


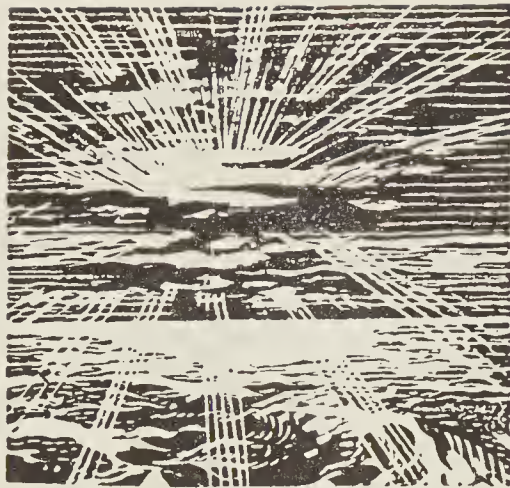


down for look for you. He tell us too bad you fellows look for me long ways and he tell us we can't come back till winter time. (Till river froze over.) So we stay and put feesh trop in water on the Klondike river. Feesh for winter---feesh for dogs. After a while he (George Carmack) tell us one man he come up the river before you fellows; that man he told me he found gold last fall away back and that is where he went again, that man. That man is named Bob Henderson. He is a white man; we haven't seen him but George saw him. George tell us let us go look

for that man; maybe he found lots of gold. He tell us like that, so we go look for him, Charley, Skookum Jim, and George Carmack---three people look for Bob Henderson. That is time they find gold, but I stay home in camp on Klondike. I look after feesh trop and dogs in camp. Three people leave Klondike own camp and start off up the creek; but the first gold found eight miles from camp. Dawson Charlie found 10¢ nugget (little pin head).

He don't find in creek; find on side hill on slide on top of rock. So we went up creek; we see gold, we pan it; but





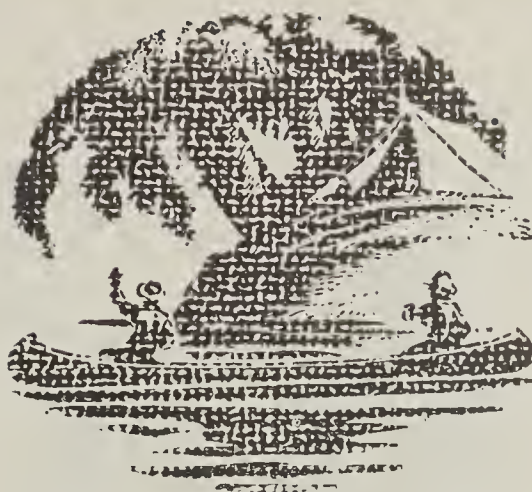
at same time they look for Bob Henderson, and find him away back, maybe forty miles from the Klondike. Bob Henderson--2-3 days trip we find him. Bob Henderson has got a creek and he got a little gold; he stay there and he is alone. But those three people stay at Bob Henderson's camp one night; the next day they turn back. But they come back different creek and they see gold again. Everytime they come down a little ways then they see gold, but they look for good large place, nobody bodder, they pan; so when they come down half way creek they take a rest on top of bank and one man go down

creek to get drink of water. Skookum Jim go down to creek for drink of water. When he took drink of water he see gold. When he got through drinking he call, "George, come down here; bring down shovel and gold pan and we try here". When George come down to the creek, "Look, George, look at gold on rock"--but George says that is gold But gold on creek he pan. First pan 50¢ gold he panned. He tried a little bit above; he found lots of gold. A little below lots of gold. Twenty minutes panned \$5 gold; -coarse gold. Then George say, "I think we have a good place; I am staking claim". Staked



claim for three people. When they staked claim they named creek, Bonanza. First creek to be found in Klondike. Lots of creek after a while. Same evening they came back to camp. When they come back they got gold and George Carmack he weighed, they had small gold scales; he says \$5 worth of gold; 50¢ per pan average. When I see the gold first just like I don't care because I no savvy; I never see gold before; now I like to see gold all the time. (laugh) Next day we go down to Forty Mile to record the claim. Forty Mile was mining camp before '98 and recorder office there. So we record claim.





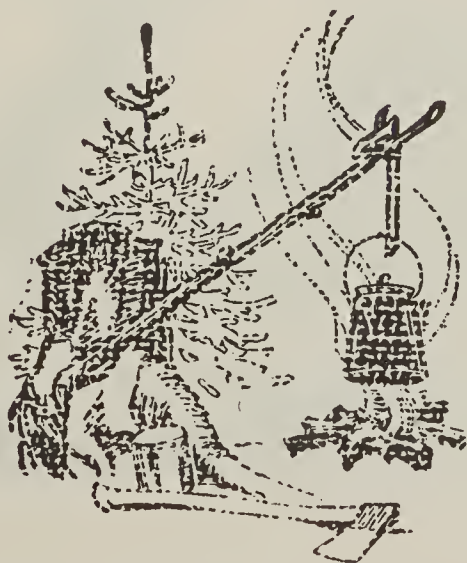
We come back again. Go down one day come back two days. When we get up to camp on Klondike we move the camp up the creek up to Bonanza so when we get up there we build ten feet sluice box. Cut with axe; we start work on first day September, worked for three weeks. In three weeks time we took out gold \$1450. At that time very cold; we cannot stand it no longer. We go down to 40 mile for winter camp. We took gold in store; we tell people we took out this gold in three weeks' time --\$1450. That is the time the big rush start. No one stay home, everybody go up. The big rush start to come up the



river two years steady; winter time, summer time, every day somebody come. After two years '98 big rush start, from out over Chilkoot Pass. When big rush starts in '98 around here, there were 20,000 people around Bennett Lake and Tagish Lake. At same time they start railroad from Skagway; that time no bulldoze; all hand work; shovel work. When railroad come this country around here, everything come; horses, policemen, everybody come. Before railroad, grub pretty high; when railroad come here, everything drop. This country am big country yet. Wayback some gold there yet, but hard

to get it. Ground too deep; have to have machine. No machine, no gold. One sack of flour from \$40 to \$100. Klondike is poor man country because ground froze; no need the machine, no pump; sink hole--make fire--build fire--thaw out--dig out winter time. Spring time wash it out. Can't do it around here. Water boddies; need machine way back.

Before white man came, no matches make fire this way; make hole part way through piece dry wood; make other piece wood stick to fit hole. Wrap skin string around stick, ends tied to another stick; draw back and forth; make first



stick turn fast in hole; put dry pieces wood around hole; turn stick fast with skin string; make wood hot and catches fire. That is all the story.

I am going to sing a dancing song. When we dance we don't dance together --lady dance herself--man dance hisself. Now we dance together. We like that. We dance foxtrot and waltz. And the love song I am going to sang. Love song for peace. That is all the story I am going to tell it. (Demonstration)





